

Checking Out the U.S.S. Orville

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Client: The Game of Nerds

Original Link: [Here](#)

Fall is almost upon us, which means new sci-fi shows. So, let's bust out the champagne bottles to christen a brand-new ship. No, we aren't bashing delicate glass over the hull of the U.S.S. Discovery aka The Flying Pyramid aka We Took A Nap On The Design Of This One. We are wasting a perfectly good bottle of Walgreens Top Shelf Selection 2017 on the U.S.S. Orville.



Source: Fox

This new ship will be warping (technically quantum driving?) in with cheers of joy or disdain in less than a month. So, in true Trekkie tech talk, let's look at the ship's specifications. What do we know so far?

Well, for one thing, this ship is actually real. Okay, not real real. But the show has decided to go old school with a practical model:



Source: Fox

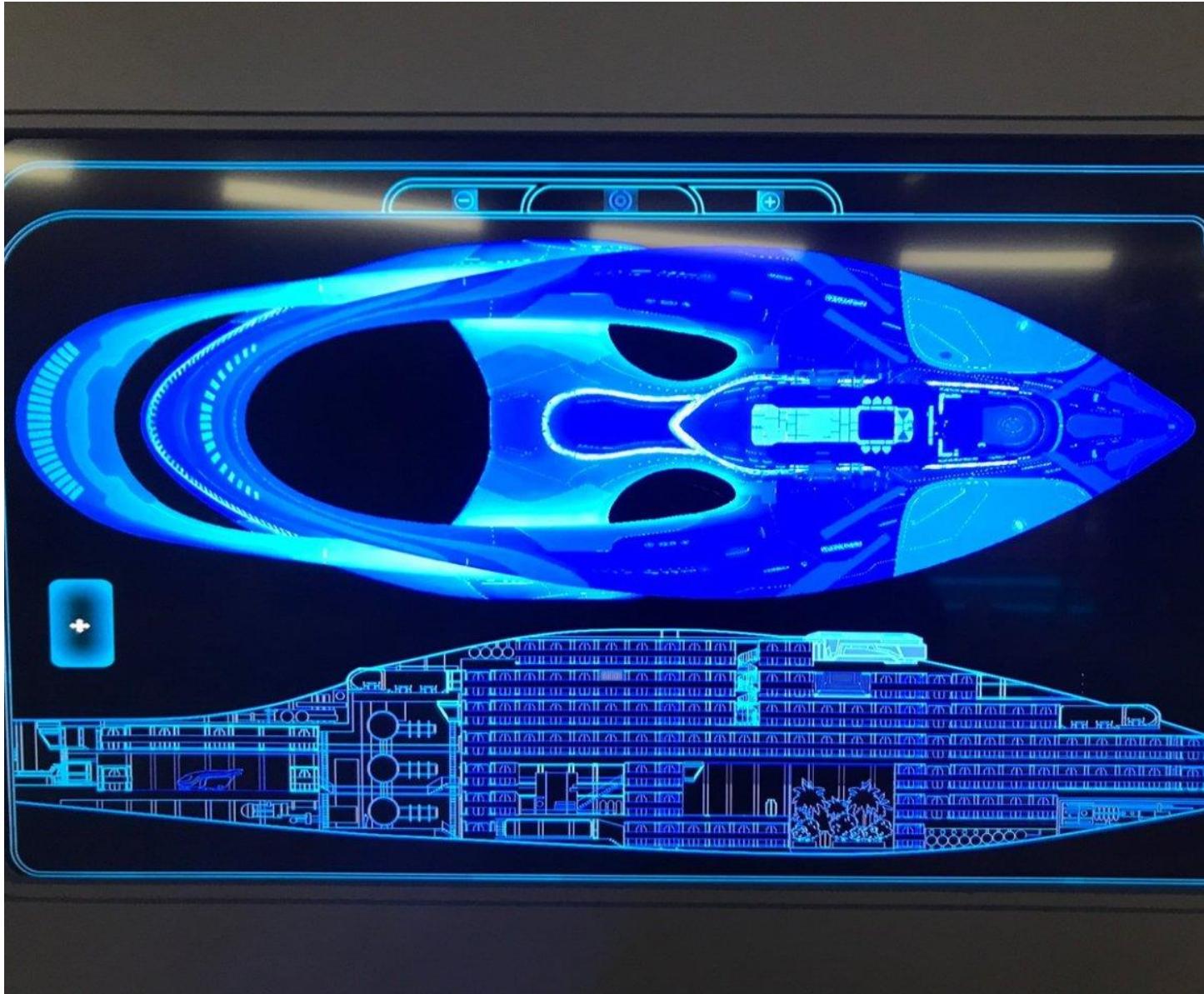
Other than that, very little. Next to nothing. It's unclear if this thing even has any weapons.

Okay, plan B. In the spirit of true nerdy speculation, let's speculate!

Design

There is nothing like the first ship of a new series to set the tone. The first time the Rebel Blockade Runner slid across the screen followed closely by the looming, menacing Star Destroyer defined the style and struggle of Star Wars. Ship designs represent shows, movies, and their people and cultures. In the case of *The Orville*, it also gives us insight into where the show's creators are drawing inspiration from.

Many critics of the new show have described it as a spoof on Star Trek, but a close look at the U.S.S. Orville reveals there is more than just Trek influences. To be clear, there are a TON of Trek influences, but there are other design elements that just fly out the window of classic Starfleet design. So, let's start with the obvious.



Source: Fox

The Orville certainly would fit in with the rest of the Federation fleet. Starfleet loves its hulls. The basic recipe for most ships is shotgun wedding a primary hull with a secondary hull, slapping some warp engines on, and calling it a day. The Orville has some of this action going on with a main section and some engine loops in the back. But this is more like the mullet of ship design: business in the front and what-the-hell-is-this-party in the back.



Photo Source: Seth McFarland Twitter

The main section is very similar to something out of Star Trek, especially in later series like *Voyager*. The lines are noticeable, almost streamline. The surfaces are mostly clean and free of random details (called greebles if you want to impress your friends with your superior knowledge). Similar to the Prometheus class or N.S.E.A. Protector out of *Galaxy Quest*, the main hull looks like it wants to go fast and furious.



Source: DreamWorks Pictures

The back, however, is a different story. This is where the design bucks most Trek influences. Star Trek has had some less conventional rear ends on their ships like the Akira and Steamrunner classes, but nothing this organic. Viewed from the side, the ship looks more like a squid with its tentacles tied in knots. The backend has more in common with *Stargate*'s later enemy: the Ori. Their ships had a similar looped rear end. Even the engines look like the Destiny's engines from *Stargate Universe*. Or a large-scale version of the Millennium Falcon's engines.



Akira Class | Source: Paramount Pictures

Without official specs, it's hard to say what this ship has in terms of weapons, defenses, and other toys. There aren't many things on the hull that look like places that spit fire at the bad guys. On the flip side, the trailer does mention the words "quantum drive," so... yeppy?

Characteristics

While the specs are slim, it is easy to see what the *Orville* is capable in terms of its characteristics. In short: this thing flies around while sticking a middle finger out to Newton and his precious "physics." If you were hoping this show would observe how objects move in space like *The Expanse* or *Battlestar Galactica*, you may feel mixed emotions. The trailer features shots of the ship dancing around larger vessels, combat orbiting around an enemy ship like a game of Asteroid, and plenty of slow, deliberate vanity shots (of course).



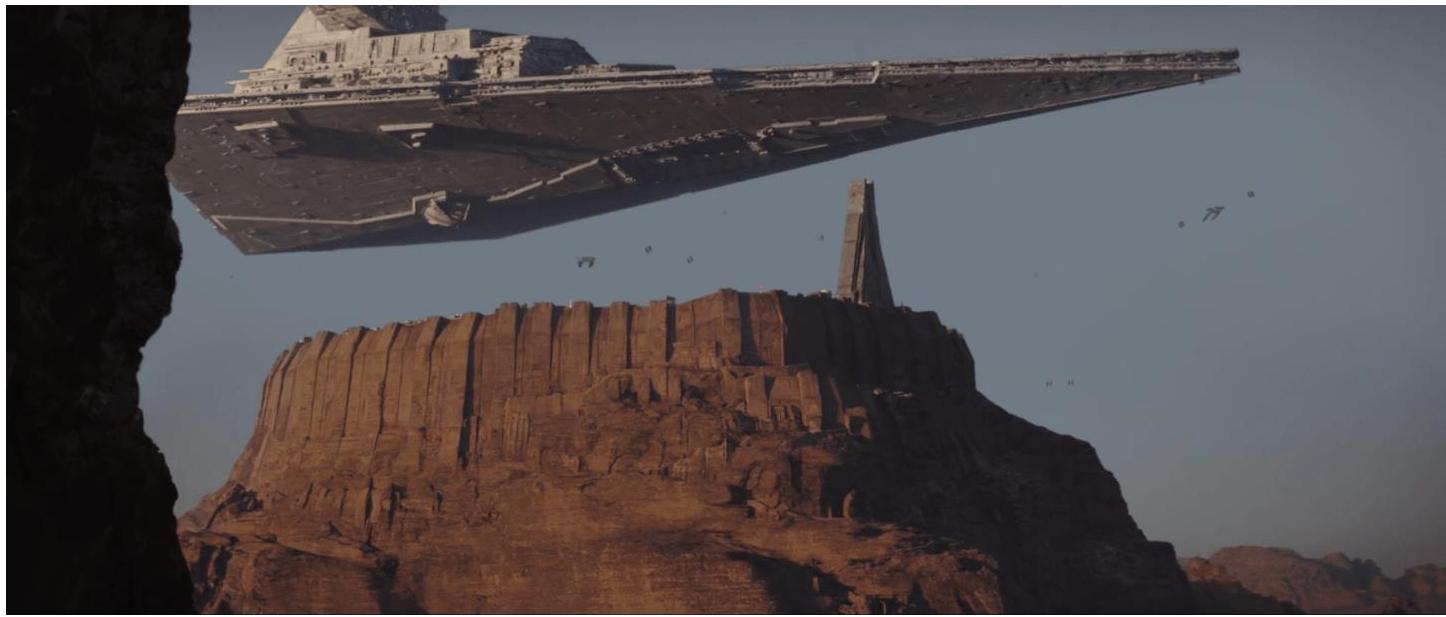
Source: Fox

Overall, this fat squid seems like it will observe the laws of physics at times, then ramp up the drama by flying like Nemo hopped up on Red Bull.

How big is the ship? Once again, nothing official, but the trailer offers some useful side-by-side shots with random people randomly walking outside in space.

Sizing something from perspective alone is tricky but given that the ship is pretty close to the platform the people are on, we get a pretty good idea of the scale. Hasty guessing combined with the number of Trek influences would suggest this ship is in the same range of scale as Federation ships. For reference, that would be around 150-700 meters or, for American readers, 1.5-7.5 football fields.

It's big, but not super crazy. Here's a comparison shot of a mile-long Star Destroyer perched above the happy-go-lucky town of Jedha City:



Source: Disney

In short, it's not massive, but it does fly like something four times smaller.

Too Much Technobabble

There is only so much detail you can go into without technical talk. Whether we'll get (or want) official details like weapons and defensive capabilities and class specifications remains to be seen. Some people love that stuff. Others just want more emphasis on small things like "the plot."



Source: Fox

The people behind *The Orville* have remained quiet about how technical they will get with their show. Star Trek is famous for technobabble (and publishing user manuals on Trek tech). Other shows like *Battlestar Galactica* just kind of left the inner workings of their tech up in the air. *The Orville* may follow in Trek's footsteps or not. We'll just have to wait and see.

The Orville premieres September 10th.